

Florida Scholarship Programs Newsletter

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice

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September 2009

Restrictive Endorsement— Requirements and guidelines

Special Points of Interest:

- The 2009-10 Private School Annual Survey will be available for submission on the School Choice Web Site on September 1, 2009.
- **To be eligible for the September payment**, new McKay students must have a valid intent filed by July 3rd and be enrolled by August 2. Returning or transferring students must have been reenrolled by August 2.



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With the start of classes and the arrival of the first scholarship payments for the 2009-10 school year, we would like to review the restrictive endorsement requirements for McKay Scholarship payments.

Florida law requires the Department to make McKay Scholarship payments by individual warrant (check) payable to the student's parent or guardian. The warrants must be mailed by the Department to the private school of the parent's choice. Section 1002.39(9)(f), Florida Statutes, then requires the parent of a scholarship student to restrictively endorse the warrant to the private school for deposit into the account of the private school.

The Department is also required to review a sample of endorsed scholarship warrants after each payment period to confirm compliance with the restrictive endorsement requirements.

The following are a few guidelines to assist you in correctly complying with these requirements:

- When a private school receives the McKay scholarship checks, the school should immediately stamp the back of each check with the words "For Deposit Only" and include the school's name, and the name of the school's bank or account number.

- The private school should immediately notify parents that the checks have arrived and ask the parents to come to the school to restrictively endorse (sign) the warrant.
- It is strongly recommended that the scholarship checks not leave the possession of the private school, and students should not bring scholarship checks home for a parent endorsement (signature).



- It is essential that the parent whose name is on the scholarship check be the individual that endorses the check. Under law, power of attorney cannot be given from the parent to the private school.

For additional details, please review the **Restrictive Endorsement Technical Assistance Paper** that may be found on the Quick Navigation Menu when logged in to the School Choice Web Site as a private school.

Annual Survey—

Ensure your school's listing in the 2010 directory

The 2009-10 Annual Survey will be available on September 1, 2009. Section 1002.42, Florida Statutes, requires all private schools in Florida to submit an annual survey. It is also a requirement for participation in the state scholarship programs. **To submit the survey:**

1. Log on to the School Choice Web Site as a private school administrator.
2. Complete the information and submit online.
3. Print the signature page and have it signed by the private school's **owner or chief administrative officer**. Then have it notarized, and mail it to the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice.

Besides fulfilling a legal requirement, submitting the survey provides other benefits such as:

- Being listed on the School Choice Web Site, where parents can view your school's information
- Receiving timely updates on federal initiatives or changes affecting private schools
- Allowing eligible students in your school to qualify for a Bright Futures Scholarship
- Getting informational updates on issues or requirements affecting private schools including IDEA and Title I

Please complete this important requirement promptly.

In the News

• Scholarship Rule Development

A workshop for the development of Rule 6A-6.0970 was held July 27 to address the following McKay and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship issues: Administrative requirements for parental participation, return of scholarship funds received erroneously by the provider, Departmental authority to conduct private school on-site inspections at the Department's discretion, and the requirement of a signed notarized parent affidavit asserting knowledge and compliance with the McKay Scholarship Program. The draft language for this rule may be viewed at: www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-6.0970. Additionally, the proposed rule amendments are currently posted and accepting comments in the *Florida Administrative Weekly* and *Florida Administrative Code* from August 14 through September 4, 2009.

• National Suicide Prevention Week

September 6-12 is themed "A Global Agenda on the Science of Prevention, Treatment and Recovery." Learn more about prevention and support, and find classroom ideas from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center at www.sprc.org and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at www.afsp.org.

Spotlight on — The School Choice Hotline



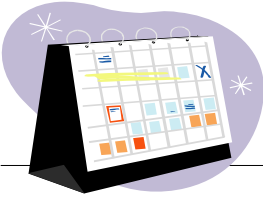
"Good morning. School Choice Hotline. How can I help you?"

If you have called our toll-free number, you have no doubt heard these words from one of our helpful and knowledgeable staff members. Each of our Hotline staff receives intensive and ongoing training in School Choice issues, and enjoys helping the many hundreds of parents, schools and others who call us each week.

Working under the direction of Customer Service Supervisor Pam London, our hardworking staff also assist with a number of other customer service activities such as responding to parent

e-mails, preparing mail-outs to new parents, and making those reminder calls to help schools meet important deadlines. But their most important job is helping our callers, which they always do with a smile.

Pictured from bottom left: Sophonie Bien-Aime, a Communications major at Tallahassee Community College (TCC) handles our Haitian-Creole calls; Noemi Bradt, bilingual in English and Spanish, is a TCC Music Therapy major; Lilian Hayes, originally from Venezuela, handles the majority of our Spanish-speaking calls. In the back are Michael Boivin (L), a Criminal Justice major at FSU, and Gene Tanner (R), an International Affairs major at TCC. Not pictured: Vickie Maldonado, also fluent in Spanish, is a psychology major at FSU.



Important Program Dates – Mark your calendar

Please be aware of the following important McKay Scholarship dates.

September 1—First quarterly payment for eligible McKay students. This includes new students who have a valid Intent filed on or before July 3, and current students; all students must have enrolled on or before August 2.

September 2—Intent filing deadline for students who missed the July 3 filing, in order to be eligible for the second quarterly payment.

October 2—Date by which students with a valid 2009-10 Intent must be enrolled in order to receive the November 1 payment.

October 5-9—Attendance Verification week for the second payment period.

November 30—Annual Survey deadline for inclusion in the Department's Private Schools Directory.

December 3—Date by which students with a valid

2009-10 Intent must be enrolled in order to receive the February 1 payment.

January 2, 2010—Date by which students with a valid Intent must be enrolled to receive the February 2 payment.

January 4-8—Attendance Verification week for the third payment period.

January 31—Intent filing deadline for the 2009-10 school year. Intents filed after this date will apply to the 2010-11 school year.

February 1—Date when intents filed for the McKay Scholarship will be for the 2010-11 school year.

March 2—Date by which new McKay students must be enrolled in order to receive the final quarterly payment.

March 3-16—Attendance Verification week for the fourth payment period.

Contact your Regional Manager promptly with any questions regarding these deadlines.

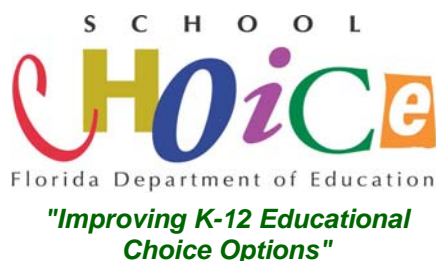
Payment Problems?

Are you missing a payment for an enrolled McKay student? If so, please check the following issues before calling our office:

- **Check the date of intent.** For new McKay students, intents filed after July 3 of this year are not eligible for the first payment.
- **Check the date of enrollment or re-enrollment.** Students enrolled after August 2 are not eligible for the first payment.
- **Check the parent/guardian Social Security Number (SSN).** We must have a valid SSN. If the parent/guardian SSN is invalid or is the same as the student SSN, the payment cannot be processed.
- **Check that only ONE parent is listed as guardian.** If two names are listed, a payment cannot be processed. The SSN must belong to the parent who is listed.
- **Check that the student's parent has officially withdrawn the student from public school.** Prior to processing the McKay Scholarship payments each quarter, the Department sends a list of prospective scholarship students to the public school districts. Any student still registered as a public school student will be designated "EPS" (Enrolled in Public School), and the student's scholarship payment will be cancelled. Look on the scholarship payment **Reconciliation Report** to see if "EPS" is next to the student's name. **If a student was reported as EPS in error**, please follow the instructions provided in the payment packet and complete a **McKay District Verification Form** as soon as possible in order that we may process a supplemental payment.

If you have any questions, please contact our Payment Specialist, Scott Lingo, at scott.lingo@fldoe.org, or

Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice



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MCKAY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM					
2009-2010 IMPORTANT DEADLINES*					
Payment Period	Payment Date	Parental Intent Deadline	Private School Enrollment Deadline	Attendance Verification Available Online	Attendance Verification Deadline
July 1 – Sept 30	September 1	July 3	August 2	N/A	N/A
Oct 1 – Dec 31	November 1	September 2	October 2	October 5	October 9
Jan 1 – Feb 28	February 1	December 3	January 2	January 4	January 8
Mar 1 – June 30	April 1	January 31	March 2	March 3	March 16

Please note:

- Private schools participating in the **Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program** (formerly the Corporate Tax Credit Program) must meet the deadlines set by the Scholarship Funding Organizations to receive FTC payment.
- The deadlines for filing a parental intent and private school enrollment are statutory deadlines. Therefore, the Department cannot make exceptions if these deadlines are missed.

Current and previous newsletters are available in PDF format on the School Choice Web Site.